

INTERVIEWEE: JOSEPH HUGHES
INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young
SUBJECT:
DATE: 27 May 1980
TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

PY: This is an interview with Joseph Hughes for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project on May 27, Tuesday, 1980, at two thirty in the afternoon at his home in the Palm Springs View Estates on Vista

From the beginning then, do you want to talk about a little what you were doing at the time you resigned and came out here.

JH: When I came to the Palm Desert area, I bought some property on Date Palm Drive. And later built a house on Date Palm Drive halfway between Highway 111 and Ramon Road. And I found I was in the wind L area. And one time it undermined a building after I had it started. So I decided later on to trade the property for something else, so that took me down into the

Palm Desert area in, what's the name of that . . .

PY: Okay, say it again because I turned it off.

JH: I finally found a place down in the Panorama Ranch area and made an exchange of property. And later found Panorama Ranch became what is now Palm Desert. And at that time there were only five houses in the whole area.

PY: Where were these five houses?

JH: In the Panorama area, which was the east part of Palm Springs at that time.

PY: You mean the east part of Palm Desert?

JH: East part of Palm Desert. It was on, what is the name of the street, Panorama Drive. But that doesn't say anything either. I don't think Panorama Drive is even there anymore.

PY: Chickory?

JH: No, I got Hickory, no, Chickory. I lived on Chickory Street.

PY: Who built the houses for you?

JH: John Harnish was the one that produced that or promoted that Panorama Ranch area.

PY: But did Adrian Swilt build the house?

JH: Later on Adrian Swilt built down there, additional

houses.

PY: But your house was built when you moved in?

JH: Oh, yes. The house was built when I moved in, and the house was built by Harnish. And it was a very modernistic house, and there were two of those that he built. One of them was occupied by a lawyer by the name of Watt. Can't say his name. Well, anyway, we had twin houses, very modernistic. What else can we say?

PY: This was what year?

JH: That was 1950.

PY: Okay. And why did you decide to come to the desert area?

JH: I saw an advertisement in the paper and followed that, and that's how I bought this property because they were promoting it.

PY: The Panorama Ranch property?

JH: No, this was in Rancho Mirage. When I first retired, I went out there and bought this property in Rancho Mirage area which was on Date Palm Drive. And that's where I built that first house. And I built it all myself. Oh, I got something on there about 1956, but I can't remember what it is.

PY: Okay. Well, let's go on. Well, it says in 1948 you

exchanged . . .

JH: Yes, 1948 I exchanged it for the one in Panorama Ranch.

PY: And then in 1950 you bought property in Rancho Mirage?

JH: Yes, I bought their frontage property. I should have put down there frontage property because it's facing on the Highway 111. Oh, am I talking to it; I thought it was off.

PY: No, it's on again.

JH: It's on again. (chuckle)

PY: It's on again. A lots of noise. Okay. So tell us a little about the properties on, in Rancho Mirage.

JH: The Rancho Mirage property was frontage property facing Highway 111.

PY: In the velt?

JH: In the velt. And across the street was the original post office.

PY: Now was that near the swimming pool that . . .

JH: That swimming pool was in the back, a couple of blocks up the hill. The public swimming pool. And this property I had on the highway was really income property. It was like motel property, and it had units, rentable units.

PY: What else was located in Rancho Mirage in 1950? Do you

remember? Was there a grocery store?

JH: I don't remember any grocery store being in Rancho Mirage at that time. Did all of our shopping in Palm Springs. And at that time in 1950 I was made into a chief of police, a chief of fire department, fire chief.

PY: Was there a gas station there?

JH: There was one gas station. And what is the fellow's name that married . . .

PY: Yoxsimer.

JH: Yoxsimer.

PY: Les.

JH: He was the one that had the gas station. He and his brother. And what else is there on there?

PY: Well, let's talk about being fire chief.

JH: Oh, yes. Well, the fire department composed of a man-drawn vehicle, and we had to blow the signal for help. And people would come out and volunteer fire department. And we hauled the thing to the fires by hand. (chuckle) Later on we got a small power-driven fire department.

PY: Were there many fires?

JH: Not many fires. Not very many. And we used to have hayride jaunts out into the hills and into the mountains

and have lunches. Most all the places in Rancho Mirage at that time were houses and no businesses.

PY: Did you spend much time at Desert Air?

JH: Desert Air. That's the one that . . . oh, yes.

PY: Hank Gogerty had.

JH: Yes. We used to have all our parties down at the Desert Air, at Hank Gogerty's, and he had motel units down around the restaurant. And the restaurant was built so when the little planes came into the airport that they had there, they had the top of the building made in the shape of a grand piano so that they thought they were coming into a musical resort. (chuckle)

PY: I'd never heard that before.

JH: Yes. And Beth Fisher lived in a couple or three units of the Desert Air. She and Don Cameron and Yoxsimer and Gogerty and the rest of us used to have real parties there. And when they had parties at the Shadow Mountain Club, Gogerty used to go down there and had a little brass bell fastened on his bosom and he'd jump around and make the bell ring. (chuckle)

PY: Well, now it sounds like you all had a good time.

JH: We sure did. Their things were wild. And what was the name of the actor?

PY: Bob Cummings?

JH: No. Over on, they just sold his house over there.

PY: Bill Boyd?

JH: No. There's something about Bill Boyd in there.

PY: Yes. Older actor?

JH: No. He was a . . . you'd come up Bob Hope Drive and you keep on going and it curved around south of a hundred and eleven. Frank Morgan had a country type, what do you call it, house.

PY: Adobe?

JH: Adobe farm-type house. And he lived there and spent a great deal of his time in Palm Springs with this old original main restaurant that used to be on the, out a little out of town, which is out of town now. It was some kind of a cottage, the cottage, but I can't say the name of it. Here I keep grabbing that thing every once in awhile. Where do I go from there?

PY: You said that you became manager of Sunshine Trailer Park.

JH: Oh, yes.

PY: If you want to talk about that.

JH: I was, I became manager of the Sunshine Trailer Park, and . . .

PY: That was in . . .

JH: Fifty-six, wasn't it?

PY: Yes.

JH: Nineteen fifty-six.

PY: Where was that located?

JH: That was located where the Sunshine Trailer Park is now, the Silver Spur Mobile Park. I changed the name to the Silver Spur Mobile Park.

PY: Why?

JH: Because the Sunshine Trailer Park didn't mean anything to anybody. And it blended in with the Silver Spur Ranch, which was promoted just down the hill from it, which seemed like a very good and appropriate name. And more apropos than Sunshine Trailer Park. Mobile Park sounded more to date.

PY: What was there when you first came to manage it?

JH: There were just the, I'll have to get my glasses.

PY: Okay, go ahead.

JH: I still have to have glasses even with my corneas, and at first I used to read finer print than this without glasses. Three days after I had the operation. You know those cards that they have that, I read the first line a few days after the operation. Well, I

can do pretty good now, but I have to concentrate on it. But the light is not right. I've got to have the light right on the print. But even now I'm not doing too good with the glasses. Well. Oh. At the time we took over the park, there were only twelve to fifteen spaces. I got down here, he added two long rows of spaces laid out and installed and the spaces and equipment personally installed.

PY: What do you mean?

JH: Well, if any of these other fellows have had any spaces put in, they have a surveyor come in and survey the thing to see where the spaces will be put and how they will be put. Now this was even an additional thing to it because it was on a slant and each one was stepped down. And I forget how many there were, but there was two long rows, I know that. But how many was in the rows, I can't tell you. But the inspector came out there and looked it over. And he said, who did you have survey the thing. I said, I surveyed it with a level and a (chuckle) tape measure, which I did. And he couldn't believe it. And he went down and these slabs, you see, were like that, running lengthwise like that. And he went down to the bottom end here and got down

on his knees and he looked up there and he said, that looks like one sheet. It was that level. One sheet after the other setting it up. That was how good a job I did. (chuckle)

PY: You were telling me also about how they'd gotten a well in that area.

JH: Oh, yes. Edith Clark, with her husband, I don't remember his first name, owned the Clark Ranch on seventy-four and they also owned the Sunshine Trailer Park. And they (cuckoo clock) tried to get water and one time they found an Indian. Somebody had brought an Indian up and told them that he could find water. And he took his shoes and stockings off and walked around on the ground and finally came to a place and he told them water. And they drilled there and they found water, but not a very heavy well. It was a small well. But it was enough water to supply them with water; back at the house they had a swimming pool at the top. No. They had their drinking water, what do you call it. Drinking water reservoir at the top and then the water was trickled down from the reservoir down to another reservoir, and that water was used for irrigation and a swimming pool. And the water from the top first well,

the water from there also went over to the trailer park and furnished the trailer park with water. And that was the only water that's ever been found on that whole hill, the 74 hill or any part of it. And all the water that they have there now was found later on down in Deep Canyon, down to the east of Palm, of Silver Spur Ranch. And that's where they've been getting their water from every since, even up in the land, homesteaded land,, back of Silver Spur Ranch. And behind Silver Spur Trailer Park or Mobile Park, I'll get it right after awhile.

PY: I heard a tale about a man who had built a swimming pool and had the water coming down from Cat Canyon, and that he had^{been}/supposedly drowned in his swimming pool. That's not true?

JH: That's not true.

PY: Could that have been some takeoff on the Clark Ranch and their swimming pool with the reservoir at the top?

JH: Well, it could have been, but I never heard that, never heard it. Oh, I'll tell you, he drowned though. But he had gone to Mexico and he got an amoeba in Mexico. And they operated on him several times, and each time they took more of his intestines out. And it finally

got too tough on him, so he just committed suicide.

And they found him in the pool face down.

PY: I'll bet that's the story.

JH: That's the story. That's the real story.

PY: And that was the Clark Ranch.

JH: That was Clark himself in the Clark Ranch.

PY: And is that home still out in the Silver Spur property?

JH: No. I don't know exactly what's up there now, but somebody else bought it. And I think they tore the whole thing down and rebuilt there, I think. But the interior of the Clark house was built with the trees that they fell up in Idyllwild and brought them down there and they were the beams in the house.

PY: Was his name Paul?

JH: Paul? I don't think so. Doesn't sound right.

PY: Where were they from? Do you know anything about that?

JH: No, I don't, but I know that they owned, they did or still do, own that Harry's Roundup, all that property on that corner in Cathedral City. And she owned property down on the ocean near, what's that rocky cliff down there?

PY: Newport or Laguna.

JH: No, not that far down. Right this side of San Diego.

PY: La Jolla?

JH: Right near La Jolla. I don't remember the name of that either.

PY: Well, did you manage the Sunshine Trailer Park for them?

JH: I managed it for them and then I, until the time it was sold in 1959. Then I quit or resigned. Then I went down and bought a house in the Silver Spur Ranch.

PY: What that a nice project?

JH: Oh, that was very good. That's nice in any way you look at it. A really good setup. And it's still growing. Boy, it's really, and later on, I don't remember what year that was, what year was Kennedy president?

PY: Sixty, well, he was assassinated in sixty-three.

JH: Sixty-three. Well, must have been about 1960 that Bing Crosby had fifteen acres at the high end or the west end of Silver Spur Ranch. Bing Crosby had fifteen acres and he built four houses up there, one for himself and one for Jimmy Doolittle and one for his mother and I think it was one for his brother, four houses. And at that time, in 1960, President Kennedy came out and stayed with him and visited with him.

PY: Not bad connections.

JH: No, not bad.

PY: Let's see. You were also a charter member of the Shadow Mountain Club.

JH: Yes. I was charter member of the Shadow Mountain Club and also a part owner at one time. What else is on there?

PY: Did you remain an owner for very long or what happened?

JH: Which was that?

PY: Did you remain an owner, a part owner, very long?

JH: I don't remember how many years it was. And they finally decided to sell the property and they off all the little owners. So it went into some kind of a dealer. What they were after, they wanted to get rid of Cliff Henderson and that's how they did it.

PY: I think that's a good way.

JH: And they did it when he was over in Europe to the Olympic games. (laughter)

PY: You mentioned a figure eight swimming pool.

JH: Yes. The Shadow Mountain, the first thing that was built at the Shadow Mountain Club was a figure eight, a large figure eight, swimming pool. It was seventy-five feet across the narrow way and over a hundred feet

the long way. And it had high diving boards and low diving boards.

PY: Do you remember who installed it at all? I mean, that must have been something unusual. Do you remember who installed it at all or anything about its installation?

JH: No. I know that when they built the swimming pool and they wanted to dedicate the swimming pool, the streets had not been put in yet and the celebrities from Hollywood came down to the dedication of the pool. And they had to walk a couple, two or three blocks, over the sand to get to the pool.

PY: You also talked about supervising some of the parties at the club.

JH: Oh, yes. I helped to supervise a lot of the parties and one big luau party that they had after the, now the pool and the building and everything, the streets were all paved and everything by this time. That date I can't tell you, but anyway they had the big luau party and what's his name?

PY: Edgar Bergen.

JH: Edgar Bergen was to be the master of ceremonies of the show. And Hula Hattie, what is Hattie's name, Hattie?

PY: Hilo.

JH: Hilo Hattie. Hilo Hattie and Bogart, not Bogart, but

PY: Minnie Pearl?

JH: No.

PY: Hopalong Cassidy?

JH: No. What's the other fellow's name there that we had there with . . .

PY: Edgar Bergen?

JH: No, not Edgar Bergen. Gogerty.

PY: Oh, Hank Gogerty.

JH: Hilo Hattie and Frank . . .

PY: Hank Gogerty.

JH: Hank Bogart, Gogerty, were the entertaining stars.

And just before the show, and my brain is jumping around in circles.

: He left for Palm Springs.

JH: No, just a minute. Chicken on me. Just before the show Edgar Bergen came to me and said he had to go to Palm Springs on business, and if the show got ready to go on, that I was to take over, which I did. And ran the show nearly the whole evening until the latter part of the evening he returned. And by that time the show was practically over. And then another time I put on a big show in the parking lot to the rear of the Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce. At that time Don

McNeally was the president of the Chamber. They made a lot of money. And what is the makers of these dolls, the big outfit that makes these dolls and toys for kids?

PY: Mattel?

JH: Say it again.

PY: Mattel.

JH: Mattel was there and they gave away several dolls to the children, the girls, and little wagons to the little boys. We had quite a show. I don't know what else. What else is on there.

PY: What do you remember about Andy, the donkey man?

JH: Oh, Andy, the donkey man, was a very knowledgeable guy to talk to, and he knew many things to entertain the kids, which he did most of the time. That's about all he did do was entertain the children on his donkeys and tell them stories and . . .

PY: Where would you meet him?

JH: Right where the donkeys were, right out on the street there. And one of the service clubs, he had trouble with his eyes, and one of the service clubs got money together and had his eyes operated on.

: The Rotary.

PY: Rotary?

JH: What?

PY: Rotary.

JH: I wouldn't say because I'm not sure which one it was.

Did you find out about Rotary?

: Yes, it was the Rotary.

JH: All right, then it was the Rotary Club that got money enough together and put him in the hospital and had his eyes operated on so he could see. In the summertime he used to take his donkeys up Highway 74 to the higher elevation where it would be cool in the summertime. And then in the fall he'd bring them back down Highway 74 down back to the desert where he'd entertain the kids for the winter. Now where are we going?

PY: Well, you also mentioned that when the south frontage road was completed . . .

JH: Oh, yes.

PY: You and Hopalong Cassidy

JH: They installed the south frontage road in Palm Desert, and when the road was to be dedicated, they called on Hopalong Cassidy. What's his name?

PY: Bill Boyd.

JH: Bill Boyd. And myself to cut the ribbon for the opening of the road.

PY: Was this in the sixties?

JH: That was, it must have been in the sixties. And the ribbon cutting was taken, took place right at the corner where the Bank of America was. I don't know what's there now. Is there anything else in there now? And . . .

PY: You mentioned some people here who are active in the area. Helen and Robert Coates. Who were they?

JH: Oh, yes.

PY: Who were they?

JH: Helen Coats was, what did they call the head nurse in charge of a hospital? What did you call a head nurse in charge of a hospital?

: Well, the supervisor.

JH: Helen Coates was the supervisor of the military hospital, no, I meant to say in Africa during World War II. I was going to give the city because Cliff Henderson built that Fire Cliff Restaurant, Lodge right there in that point like that so that you could look out the window and look up and see (phone rings) San Gorgonia. And that is the setup as they were in in Africa. And he was there at that, Cliff was there in that time, too. In Africa and Bob Coates was an officer in the Armed

Forces in Africa. And they got married finally there and came back and located in . . .

PY: Palm Desert?

JH: No, what's the other place, I was just . . .

PY: Palm Village?

JH: No. What used to be Palm Desert, what is Palm Desert now, but it wasn't before.

PY: Panorama Ranch?

JH: Panorama Ranch. (chuckle)

PY: Are they still there?

JH: No, they're down in Newport Beach. And . . .

PY: Did they do much for the area? I mean were they involved in Palm Desert at all?

JH: They used to go to all the parties and help with everything they could help with in entertaining everyone that came to town. And one time I was in the explosion and had my hair burned off and my arms and faced burned, and she came to my rescue.

PY: And Brody and George Snelson.

JH: Brody and George Snelson lived at, what's the name of that trailer park going up seventy-four there on the right hand side? Way up, halfway up.

PY: Indian Springs?

JH: No, no, way up.

PY: Beyond Silver Spur?

JH: Way up beyond Silver Spur, way up. There was a trailer park way back up there, say ten, twelve miles up there. I'll think of it maybe. Well, anyway, they lived up there.

PY: Not in Palm Desert then.

JH: Not in Palm Desert. So that . . .

PY: That's okay, don't worry about it.

JH: That's all right. We'll forget that.

PY: But the Snelsons were . . .

JH: Snelsons used to come down to these parties at the Shadow Mountain Club, and they lived in the Silver Spur Mobile Park at one time. And his wife still lives in Palm Desert. He died and she moved to Palm Desert. But the place I'm up trying to tell you about, he built a house up there and they moved up there. He personally built the house.

PY: Let's see here, A. B. Bayshelf.

JH: A. B. Bayshelf was one of the butterflies of Palm Desert (chuckle) and she used to entertain the people and put on parties quite a bit of the time, both at home and at the Shadow Mountain Club. And George Berkey

was the supervisor and lived in, where did he live?

PY: He lived in Indio for awhile.

JH: He lived right on Washington Street, but he was very active at the club.

PY: How about Beth Fisher?

JH: Beth Fisher was a very active, and she lived at the Gogerty Motel, no, what was the name of the park?

PY: Desert Air Hotel?

JH: Desert Air Motel. That was what it was.

PY: And Fred Seeman.

JH: And Fred Seeman was a retired women's dress manufacturer, and he lived, can't think of the name of the place, but he lived right there in Palm Desert, I'll have to say that. And he was very active. He was quite a horseman, he used to ride his horse every day.

PY: Around Palm Desert?

JH: Around Palm Desert.

PY: Were there many others riding horses?

JH: Oh, yes. There was another one there that I mentioned. What's her name? A woman there.

PY: Helen Coates or Brody . . .

JH: No, down further, way . . .

PY: Beedy?

JH: What?

PY: Beedy.

JH: No. Seeman.

PY: Fred Seeman.

JH: Fred Seeman was the one we were talking about, but
Fred Seeman married . . .

PY: Beth Fisher?

JH: No. Oh, my golly, Mrs. Seeman, Mrs. Seeman.

PY: It's not B. B.

JH: No, no, let me see. (paper rustling) I don't seem to
have her name down there. I thought I had it down there.
What's Seeman's first name?

PY:

JH: Wait a minute. Brody Snelson, George Snelson's, she
lives in Palm Desert still. And they were the ones
I told you that he built a house up in the mountain
there. What is that area where Snelson lives up in
the mountain there?

: Anza, isn't it?

JH: No, no, no. Not that far. You know where you get the
redwood.

: Mesquite?

JH: Mesquite.

: All the first area up in

JH: What's the name of it? Where you get the mesquite.

PY: Not

: No. No.

JH: There's a trailer park further on up.

: I don't know.

JH: By that name. Well, the heck with it. (laughter)

Anne Carpenter and Jeanette Constantino which is, you got her other name. I can't remember her other name.

PY: Rabtimer. ~~What's his name?~~

JH: Rabtimer, that's it. Pat and George Anderson. He was in the, he had a real estate school down there on the frontage road in Palm Desert. Just lately. They only, somehow or other they cancelled that license he had and I don't remember what for. So he can't teach anymore in his real estate sales business. George Berkey, Cliff and Carl and Randall Henderson. You know Randall Henderson? Did you know him?

PY: I didn't know

JH: Well, Randall Henderson was the guy that had the museum, and his wife was . . .

: Seria.

PY: Seria.

JH: Seria, yes. And she was a fantastic artist. What would you call it, making busts with your hands.

PY: Sculpture.

JH: Sculptress. She was terrific. They've got stuff of hers down there now. I don't know if she's dead or not, but I know he is.

PY: No, she's living.

JH: She's still living?

PY: Yes.

JH: That's good. Randall Henderson, he was a real estate man. He came out here from Santa Monica and he was in the, he had the Packard agency in Santa Monica.

PY: Randall or Carl?

JH: Randall.

PY: Because Randall was

JH: No, I'll take that back; you're right, it was Carl. And Carl is the one that had the Packard agency and when he quit that, he came out here and opened up a real estate office. And Randall is the one that was in the museum. And Cliff, of course, is the one that promoted Palm Desert. And Beth Fisher was the wife of the Fisher Brewing Company.

PY: Oh.

JH: In Salt Lake City. And Hal Capp, of course, you know.

PY: Yes.

JH: And the Ben Delettes, they lived on what was, used to be . . .

PY: Country Club?

JH: No, it was on Bob Hope Drive, but that isn't what it called it at that time.

PY: Rio Del Sol.

JH: Yes, that's it. (laughter) I'm glad your brain jumps around quicker than mine. And Don Cameron and Dr. Alexander. I've been trying to think of Dr. Alexander's first name, but I think it was Charles, Dr. Charles . . .
: Charles.

JH: Charles Alexander. I just thought of it just now.
: Charles and Marie.

JH: Marie. Well, I didn't know Marie. I knew Marie, but I didn't remember her name. Well, you got Fred Seeman already.

PY: Now tell me about Dr. Alexander.

JH: How's that?

PY: Tell me about Dr. Alexander.

JH: Well, Doc Alexander was the life of all the parties at the Shadow Mountain Club. He was the real life of the party, of any of them. And he was a terrific doctor. He really took care of people like the old-time doctor

would.

PY: Was he one of the first in the area?

JH: He was the first in the area.

PY: Before Dr. Morris.

JH: Oh, yes. Before Morey. And Doc Morey, if you go to him, the only people that were constant customers of him, to him were women. And all he ever gave them was a prescription for, what's that sleeping pill? (laughter)

PY: Vallium?

JH: Vallium? It might have been Vallium. It might have been Vallium.

: Vallium, yes.

JH: And that's the only thing he would give them. And, you know, all the drugstores, they had to go clear over to San Bernardino to get the prescription filled. They had so many prescriptions for that Vallium. And my sister was out here during that raids, and she complained to a friend, I don't know, somebody, one of the women. So she took her down to Morey. Morey gave her a prescription. I had to take her clear over to San Bernardino to get it filled. And after that she'd be sitting there like a mummy. You'd be talking to her and here she's sitting like this.

: They don't use that too much anymore.

JH: What?

Side 2:

JH: We decided one day to have a big party around the pool, so we built booths all around the pool, and we had a booth for this and a booth for that and a booth for another thing. And the one booth that stood out more than any of them was the wild man from Borneo. And had Dr. Addis there, and I invited him down. And I said, we'll want you for a booth here. And he said, what is it. And I took him over and showed him the outfit. It was, what is it?

: Dress.

JH: No, sacks. Potato sacks.

PY: Potato sacks?

: Yes. And a grass

JH: Burlap, had burlap laying around there, and we had some heavy chains and a big wig. And we painted him up and put the wig on and put the chains on his arms and legs and then put the burlap on him. And he had big mustache, big black mustache.

: And teeth that protruded. (laughter)

JH: Yes, that teeth that protruded. And he was very sedate.

: Reserved.

JH: When Elsie came along, he said, "Look what Joe did to me."

: I just stood there and howled. (laughter)

JH: And there were many other such shows all around there, and some that I can't think of right now. I don't know how to explain them. But that one show I could explain because I couldn't forget that one. And he is the man that saved me with my teeth.

: Saved his life

JH: When was that?

: In about fifty-four.

JH: Four.

: Joe, in 1954.

JH: He saved me a problem with my teeth which might have snuffed me out in 1954. I'm still here pounding the pavement at ninety-two. (laughter)

PY: You just had your birthday then.

JH: No, it's going to be the 18th of June.

PY: You'll be ninety-two?

JH: Ninety-two.

PY: So you all came to the area in about fifty-four?

: In fifty-four is when we came to the area, yes. And we opened up a over in Palm Desert at that time, thinking that would only be temporary. Not temporary, that it would only be summertimes. But so much and we came back here and opened up an office here in Palm Springs instead. (chuckle) And Joe was the first patient when he came to us. His neck was swollen even with the chin.

PY: Where did you come from when you first came to the desert?

JH: Well, indirectly from Wisconsin. I went on a vacation in Wisconsin and landed in Washington, Seattle, and I couldn't stand the rain there, so I headed for California and got to San Francisco. And I was in San Francisco for three months and I found out that the only way you could get a job in California, in San Francisco especially, you had to be a native-born son. And you couldn't even buy a job unless you were a native son. So then I came to Los Angeles, and then I . . .

: Oh, I think you should tell about the bomber.

JH: Well, that's got nothing to do with Palm Desert.

: Oh, no.

PY: I was just curious. You know, you said you retired from the motion picture industry.

JH: Forty-seven.

PY: So how did you ever land a job as special effects technician?

JH: Well, I have it. I had all kinds of tricks.

PY: Those are the ones you play on your friends.

JH: That's right.

: You're so right. (laughter)

JH: Well, I landed in L. A. And I don't know how I ever got to it, but I went down to Santa Monica and I applied for a job down there and they wouldn't even listen to me. And I found out that they had had two teams of two men each in that area trying to get the people signed up for gas. Now the Edison at that time had the gas and the electric down there. And so I didn't get that job. So it wasn't only a few days, not more than two or three days, they had a fire in the gas meter shop. And the gas meter shop was right to the north of the pier going out the Santa Monica pier. And you'd go into it on an elevated platform above the road into the second story. So I went down there and applied for a job repairing and overhauling these dern gas meters because I'd had experience with that in Tacoma, Washington,

and I knew all about it. So they gave me a job right away. I went to work right away. And I only worked there about, I don't know, it couldn't have been any more than four or five days, and I finally took a notion to take off at noon. And I went home and I took a bath, got cleaned up, and went right back up to that Santa Monica office again to apply for a job because I heard about these fellows that they had that didn't make good to get anybody signed up for this gas line to go through. So they turned me down again. And I said, "No," I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." I said, "You give me that job for one month, and I'll go out and work the area and if I don't make good in one month, you don't owe me a nickel." So they hired me. Didn't cost them anything. So at the end of the month I had so many signed up that I, and then I had a book and I had a record of every house in the whole area. And I went back and I got these few, I don't know how many it was, but it wasn't very many, that I signed up. I said, "These are only just some that I got, but I got all these that I'm going to get." And I said, "If you want to give me the same deal for another month, and if at the end of the second month I don't come up with it,"

I said, "You don't owe me a nickel, no money." So they couldn't lose. So they hired me for another month. And that time I went out in the morning and I got a few of these hot ones, and then I went back and dug up some more new ones. And the next day I went back and got a few more hot ones. And I went back and checked up for some new ones. I did that right along. At the end of the second month I had all they could needed and wanted. And on the strength of it they took this main gas line and went all the way through the town way up through Sawtelle which is now West Los Angeles, and then they put a T across there. Well, when they put the T across, Southern California Gas coming in from the other way were trying the same thing, but they would have never made it because we got the gas, I got that T in there first. So they didn't dare cross that. Well, I got paid for two months, and I got a job on the sales depart . . . yes, sales in appliance sales. So I worked in the appliance sales for five months. And they had such an improvement in sales in five months, they made me new business manager. In five months, in seven months' time.

PY: What time span are we talking about? What year was . . .

JH: Nineteen ten. You weren't even around.

PY: I wasn't even a flash in anybody's eye. (laughter)

JH: So I hung around there for quite awhile. And I got tired of that. I don't know what I did next. Oh, yes, I do. I went, I quit and I got in with the Burns Detective Agency, but I didn't get in with Burns Detective Agency directly. I got in, I knew William J. Burns. And at that time William J. Burns, who was the William J. Burns Detective Agency, was the United States, not the FBI because the FBI wasn't even known at that time. United States . . .

: Investigation worker?

JH: It was investigation, but that's not what I want. Anyway, it was in World War I, and they hired me to go around, I was in the studio, that's where I got introduced to the studios. They put me in the studios and I went on location with the companies and all that stuff. I was a snooper. We didn't make hell.

: Investigator.

JH: That isn't what I want. United States Secret Service. That's what I was under.

: Oh.

JH: United States Secret Service, and William J. Burns at

that time was the head guy of the United States Secret Service. And I worked one time I worked down here at the L. A. Shipyard. And all these jobs that I got with the studios or wherever I went I got paid for the work I did there as a machinist down at the shipyards. And in the movies I did special effects stuff. That's where I got my idea to get into it later on. Anyway I got paid for the work I did there, and I got paid from Burns for doing the investigation. So I was getting two checks every month. (laughter) Oh!

: What about Tarzan?

JH: Yes, I was in the original Tarzan picture, but wait a minute, just a minute now.

: Tarzan and . . .

JH: Oh, I'll forget that. I don't know what it is. I'll say that I finally, no, no, after World War I, I went to work for the William J. Burns Detective Agency. And I was a snooper, a dick. (chuckle)

: And the Barrymores come in there.

JH: Oh, wait, I'm not that far. I got to get up there a little at a time or I get all lost in the folly. But they used to give me different things, like for instance, the hotels, at that time there was a bunch in L. A.

that was a, I don't know what they called them. There was about fifteen or eighteen of them, and whenever they wanted to put over a bond issue to pave a street, even whether they were going to pave them or not, this group promoted the thing. And they used to go down to the Biltmore and Ambassador and the Hayward Hotel and the Rosalind Hotel, that's so far as I can go now, four of them, and they'd put on these big feeds for themselves, you see. Giving themselves a party. And write a slip, and they'd send the slip to the Council. Well, the City Council wouldn't pay it. So the hotel turned it over to the Burns Detective Agency, and the Burns Detective Agency turned it to me to go get it. I'd go over there and sometimes I'd really get hard with them. And they'd call up the office and tell the manager, it was Burns, to call me off. I was burning them up. (laughter) So, anyway, we went along with that for a long while. And finally they put me in charge of the hotel detail, which made you have letters and communications with all the bigger hotels all over the United States. And they'd send their complaints in that were in that area, the L. A., Palm Desert, L. A., Beverly Hills and Santa Monica, all that area. So I'd have to write letters and

check up on them and tell them what was going on or whether you could collect or not collect. And there were fellows that, these salesmen at that time were really slick. I guess they are yet. They write a check here and by the time they're over in Cleveland this check has bounced. So then they send the check over to catch him over in Cleveland, and he gives them another check for New York. By the time this check is (laughter) he's gone somewhere else, so you got to keep chasing him around from one hotel to the other. And every time he'd give you a rubber check. So where do we go from there?

PY: Well, you must have at some point left that and gone to the movie industry.

JH: Right about that time, that's where I got into the movies, right there. And that was a funny part, I was able to get into the movies at the worst part of the depression in the thirties. And the first picture that I worked on was, you just named the name.

:

JH: Morgan.

: Barrymore.

JH: Barrymore. John, Lionel and Ethel Barrymore made a picture, "Rasputin," Russian picture. And I'll just

tell you one incident that happened in the Russian picture was that they wanted to get rid of Lionel.

He was a prince. So, what's the other guy, Bill, no, what's his name?

: Lionel?

PY: John.

JH: John. John gets the help, and they go out the back door of the castle and right down at the bottom of the stairs there, they cut a hole in the ice that square and that deep. The ice was that deep, styrofoam. So they saw a hole in there and they had it so they could pull it out. So they brought Lionel down and some of guards are help, brought Lionel down and they pulled the thing out and they shoved him down the ice hole and put the ice in back in on top and here he was down on the stage. (chuckle) But that's the way they killed him; they put him in the ice and froze him over. And that picture was the time that MGM introduced something that they'd been working on for a long time. And some fellow had a patent on it finally. And they had fifteen colored guys, and they had a round platform that was about, I would say it was about twenty feet in diameter. And they had dancing girls very scantily

dressed and they put them on this platform. And all these colored guys was the same height. So they got down, picked up the platform like that and had it on their heads and they walked around with the platform and these gals are dancing. And here's a fellow up on a platform, way up their eighteen feet up, has a camera shooting down on them. And that camera was tied down from this corner and that corner and that corner, had wire coming down with turn buckles on so they could pull it down so that even you couldn't move it no matter how you tried. But it was up there on a still platform, but they still had to have it so it didn't even murmur. And when they showed that picture, there were fifty people down there instead of fifteen. That's what the patent did. And that was the first time that was ever used. But the one thing they spent thousands of dollars on was to try to get instant play. You know, you see instant play all the time now, nothing to it. They can even go back to any play you want right now and start from there and show you what happened. But they spent thousands and thousands of dollars and couldn't get near it at that time.

PY: Was that Tarzan?

JH: What?

PY: Tarzan?

JH: Tarzan. I was in the picture with the . . . I mean I worked on the Tarzan picture and that was the first Tarzan that was ever made with Weismuller, and that was made out at a lake out here on Ventura Boulevard. And the lake is named after a lake in England. I can't think of that. And the deer, boy, there were deer around there. And they had animals, they brought animals even from the St. Louis zoo out there. And they had a hippo they brought out there. And the hippo had a baby and the hippo disowned the baby. And it went out into the lake, huge lake. And during the daytime they'd go around looking for him. You couldn't find him. And the only way they could do, they had to wait until night and would come out to eat. And they had high-powered gasoline lamps. And they'd try to catch them that way because the baby wasn't being fed. And I think it took them a whole week before they were able to get a line on it. And they got it back and they saved the baby anyway. But they were trying to feed the baby with milk, which is the best thing they could do. And one time, another thing on that Tarzan picture

was an elephant stampede. They had every elephant, they had elephants from everywhere, from the Seattle zoo, Oakland, or San Francisco, I don't know, zoo. St. Louis zoo. They had elephants! That place was loaded with elephants! And they had an oak tree that was, must have been, oh, at least seven feet in diameter, huge oak tree. And they got these elephants all gathered around underneath this oak tree, and this trainer from Ringling Brothers seemed to be the outstanding trainer with elephants. So they brought him from somewhere. I don't know where they brought him from, and he got out there and climbed that tree. And there was a certain kind of a noise that you make and it drives these elephants nuts. And they went nuts. I mean they plowed each other down. They knocked each other down. You'd never believe it. And there was one cameraman that was way over on the side and he was halfway under one of those big circus wagons. And he was grinding away and grinding away, and one of these buggers was heading right for him. And they got the camera and he ducked under the wagon. And some guy told him, he said, "Do you think you're safe under that wagon." He said, "That bugger took a notion to go through, he'd gone

right on through it. (laughter) Oh, what was the other one, another one?

: How did Tarzan swing from tree to tree?

JH: Oh, that's nothing. Any kid can do that. But we made an elevator out of nothing and put a pulley up and a rope and fastened it onto the, got the elephant to get it on his trunk. And he walked over here and pulled the elevator up from down the hole down there. He'd pull it up here and Tarzan and the kid, the girl, the girl.

: Jane.

JH: Jane. They walked off of the elevator. (chuckle)

PY: Elephant power.

JH: Yes.

: Tell her about Barrymore, Joe. I think that's

JH: Well, that was Barrymore. Well, all right. I'll tell you another one about Barrymore. Oh, one time we had a setup in a stage and had a picket fence, and these pickets were, oh, I think they must have been about nine feet tall or so. And Satan was down here talking to Barrymore and wanting Barrymore to eat one of those apples. This was just a trunk of a tree put down there and then they decorated it. And then they put apples

on it so it made it an apple tree. That's the way they made trees; they didn't have an apple tree. They just made anything. So Satan was trying to get Barrymore interested in eating, tasting one of these apples. If he'd taste that apple, Satan would have control of him. So Barrymore said, "Well, I can't reach it."

Barrymore at that time had arthritis so bad in his hips he couldn't stand up or walk around. He was in a wheelchair all the time. So . . . I'll get up there in a minute.

: (laughter)

JH: That's a funny thing. My brain falls apart.

: Satan wanted . . .

JH: What?

: Satan wanted him to go.

JH: Oh, well, wait a minute. Satan, yes. Satan wanted him to go. He told Satan, he said, "You know that I can't get up there and get that apple." He said, "Why don't you go over there and get the apple for me." So Satan went over and got the apple. And he said, Barrymore said, "Now eat it." No, bite it now. Let me see you bite it. So he bit it and he got himself trapped and he was inside up the tree. And then all the time he was up the tree,

he was trying to get Barrymore to come over and get in one of the apples. (cuckoo clock) So during the shooting of the picture, wherever it was along the line, I got an idea. And I went over to Barrymore and I said, "Tell their manager, company manager, to call lunch." This is eleven o'clock in the morning. I said, "Tell them to call lunch until two o'clock." So I went away. So he called the manager over and told him, and so they called the lunch. And while they went to lunch, I went over to the leather room. Now you can't do any of these different departments. You've got to have the fellow in that department do that and this and that and that and that, so I had to go over to the leather department and I had a belt made that wide to put around him. And then in the back it had a ring, a metal ring, sewed into the leather. And then when we got around to two o'clock, we went back shooting and got to this point to go up and get the apple. I had the wire already, piano wire, in this ring and way up on the top where the lights are on the set there was a fellow up there had ahold of this piano wire. So when they got ready to have him get the apple, all I did was give him a sign and he pulled him up on his seat in the chair and then on his feet they

had little skiis that long with a little hole in it with piano wire and a fellow on his knees over there. And I'd give him the signal, why he started pulling Lionel's seat like that and pulled him over to the fence where he could reach the apple. And then after they got the apple, they cut. And, of course, there was other shots there, but I'm going to tell you where, what happened after that, the last part of it was. They had him on a treadmill and he was supposed to go to heaven. And part way up the treadmill was a fence. It looked like strips of wood and then it had flowers woven around here. And so he was at the Pearly Gates. So they opened up the Pearly Gates and the treadmill started and the fellows up there holding him up in the treadmill was knocking his feet around down there. And as soon as they got past this Pearly Gates, the Pearly Gates closed and the guys down here, that controlled down here, he shuts off the treadmill right away before the guys go off the other end. You know what a treadmill is, I hope.

PY: Oh, yes.

JH: (laughter)

: Who was the fellow that you put on the horse?

JH: Oh, that was Mickey Rooney. You know, another fellow

and I made a horse at MGM out of rubber. It was a rubber about that thick. What kind of rubber, I don't know. Anyway, inside of this was a mechanical gadget that we built up. We could make the eyebrows move. We could make his nostrils move. We really had that thing down. And I forget what else it could do. There was several different things you could do with that horse. Well, anyway, Mickey Rooney was supposed to be, they had a whole company there, and Mickey Rooney was supposed to ride this horse. The company showed up and the extras showed up, but Mickey Rooney didn't show up. And they waited clear until noon time and nothing happened. Finally one of the fellows said, "I can have him for you here tomorrow morning." He knew where he was. And he was down at La Jolla with his grandmother. I mean the woman is as old as his grandmother, I'll put it that way.

: (laughter) Built his home.

JH: Yes.

PY: That fifteen acres up there?

JH: Yes. Well. I don't know what else I got. There's a lot of it up there, but I don't know what it is.

PY: (laughter) Well, I appreciate what you've written down and what you've talked about.

JH: Good. I hope it works out.

PY: Go ahead.

JH: Fred Seeman had an Arabian horse, and later he had a colt from the Arabian horse. And he took his horse out for an exercise run and the colt was along. And something happened out in the middle of the desert, scared the horse, and he accidentally was thrown off, which would be hard for him to do because he was very good on a horse. But the horse came back to the barn alone. And he had a heck of a time walking from clear out in nowhere back to the barn. And at that time he had the horse in a stable on Clancey Lane. And later on he used to take, what's Seeman's . . .

: Wife's name?

JH: Yes.

: Evelyn

JH: Evelyn. Later on he got Evelyn interested in riding with him and she had a horse also. And so they used to finally get into the habit of riding together out on the desert. Now you better shut it off because I'm out of wind.

PY: Start again.

JH: Oh. I want to tell you about the . . .

: Horses. The horses?

JH: Yes, in the early days Carl Henderson used to put on horse shows. And they had the young women riding these horses around the barrels, barrel racing, and they were also speed racing.

PY: Was this out by Cook Street and

JH: Yes, right. Right.

PY: Who owned that property?

JH: That was the county, just county. I think that's in Palm Desert now, isn't it?

PY: It's Del Safari Country Club or something.

JH: Oh.

PY: Or next to it. I mean there's a house in there and then they're clearing away that old barn.

JH: Yes, yes.

PY: Arena area.

JH: I had another one, but it went away. Seeman came over, steerage from Europe. I think it was Germany, and he landed in New York and he got a job as a bus boy. And then he finally got to be a waiter, and he got to be a head waiter. And some way or another he got involved in making clothing. So he started making women's clothes, and through that he made a fortune.

PY: Does he have anything to do with shipping lines?

JH: No.

PY: Isn't it Sieman . . .

JH: No, that's a different one.

PY: Oh.

JH: S-I-E-M-A-N. Well, the boiler ran dry again.

: What about the horses?

JH: What horses?

PY: Oh, I think you talked about them.

JH: I told about the horses.

: Okay. He and Evelyn rode around.

JH: Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW